

Warwickshire Flora Group

Newsletter No. 10, December 2015

MARSELIA. A NEW INVASIVE AQUATIC FOR THE BRITISH ISLES?

The residents of Baddesley Ensor were proud of their new wildlife pond. A list of native plants was sent to the contractor and it was planted up at the beginning of March. Later on in the year, when the plants had settled in, this plant, certainly not a native, was seen to have colonized at least two-thirds of the circumference of the pond, growing in the mud in the shallows for about the width of a metre.

It is an unlikely shaped species of fern called *MARSELIA* (Clover Fern) that has only recently become available to horticultural retailers.

A specimen went sent to Dr. Fred Rumsey at the Natural History Museum, who was unable to give it a species name, as it was not fertile. It is likely to be *M. quadrifolia*, a European native of seasonally flooded habitats which is seriously declining. This is the first time that the plant has been seen outside a garden in the British Isles. It is able to spread by runners and may well become a nuisance.



Photo by J. Roberts.

RECORDING FOR THE BSBI ATLAS 2020.

In 2014, John and Val Roberts offered to survey some of the more poorly recorded monads in the central and southern part of the county, for the proposed BSBI Atlas 2020. During two seasons visiting many unfamiliar Warwickshire villages, John and Val made 80 different trips to 70 different 1 km squares and sent in a massive

11, 389 records!

Five other Flora Group members, Graham Thompson, Jacky Hardy, Mary Taylor and Stephen Trotter have all adopted tetrads near where they live and Linda Trost has been surveying churchyards near Rugby.

If you think you can help with recording, please contact us, you can do as little or as much as you like and you do not need to be an expert.

Please send in any outstanding or even any ordinary records for 2015 as soon as you can.

New Species for 2015.

This year saw 14 new taxa added to the county list. The pick of the eight garden escapees were **Corsican Heath (*Erica terminalis*)**, John and Val Roberts finding the fourth modern British record growing next to the canal in Napton and **Tall Fleabane (*Erigeron annuus*)**, found by David Wall near the station in Sutton Coldfield.

This year we chose to collect **Eyebrights**. Eight sets of voucher specimens were sent off to Chris Metherell, the BSBI recorder, who identified two new hybrids for Warwickshire: ***Euphrasia confusa x nemorosa*** from Napton Quarry and ***E. arctica x nemorosa*** from Ufton Fields. The best find, however, was of a colony of ***E. micrantha*** from Sutton Park, a true heathland species that had been known about since 1866 but had not been critically examined before.

We were pleased to find twenty new tetrad records for five species of **Hawkweeds (*Hieracium*)** this year. Two new species were: **Large-toothed Hawkweed (*Hieracium prominentidens*)**, a tall large-flowered species found at Pooley Fields Country Park and **Dappled Hawkweed (*H. scotostictum*)** a garden escape with blotchy leaves that is sometimes sold in garden centres as "Leopard Hawkweed". It was seen on the Flora Group meeting to Lapworth.

Agni-Louiza Arampoglou, from the Warwickshire Biological Records Centre, discovered a record of **Marsh St. John's-wort (*Hypericum elodes*)** hiding amongst some old paperwork. It was found in 1992 near the River Sowe by Val Cooper. The site will be investigated again in 2016.

The stonewort ***Nitella mucronata*** was found on the Flora Group visit to Alvecote Wood in August. It was a re-find of an extinct species that had only been seen once before near Rugby in c 1950.

Full details of all discoveries will appear in the BNHS Proceedings later in the year.

WARWICKSHIRE'S WINTER WILDFLOWER CHALLENGE

Please come and join us on this year's annual BSBI New Year's Plant Hunt around Kenilworth to see how many plants in flower we can see in three hours. This year we will walk around Abbey Fields and Kenilworth Castle. We will meet at 10 a.m. on

Sunday 3 January 2016 at the main car park to the east of Abbey Fields, off Bridge Street, Kenilworth, CV8 1BP.

SUTTON PARK RECORDING

During 2015 Ian Trueman organized a series of surveys at Sutton Park NNR. The plan is to record this fantastic site thoroughly in 500 metre squares and produce a flora in the next year or two. We have already found many rarities such as *Persicaria minor* (Small Water-pepper), *Euphrasia micrantha* and a large new colony of *Carex laevigata*.

If you would like to join the Birmingham and Black Country Recording Group and take part in the 2016 season please send your email address to Sara Carvalho at

enquiries@ecorecord.org.uk

BOTANICAL TALKS AT LOCAL NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETIES

Thu 3 Dec	The Trials and Tribulations of an Urban Botanist	Brian Laney	Rugby NHS
Fri 4 Dec	Plant Hunting in the Rockies	John Page	Coventry NHS
Thu 10 Dec	Scintillating Sicily	John Roberts	Warwick NHS
Fri 4 Mar	Nature in the Urban Landscape	Ian Trueman	Coventry NHS

Further details of times and venues can be found on the appropriate website.

Be prepared to pay a small visitor fee for each meeting.

Contact us at: John and Monika Walton, johnwalton46@tiscali.co.uk or 01827 712455